

The Western Seminary Bulletin

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

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HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

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Opinions of Us and Their Value

HENRY VAN DYKE

IN the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke, verses one to ten, the story of the healing of the centurion's servant is told.

The third verse of this chapter informs us that this centurion sent a committee of the elders of the Jews to request Jesus' efforts on behalf of the sick servant. The latter part of verse four and verse five record these words. "He was worthy for whom he should do this; for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue."

Note their words, "He is worthy." Here is an opinion which these Jewish elders held about a Roman soldier. Ordinarily the Jews hated the Romans, perhaps justly. But this centurion was an exception. He was favorably regarded by them. Why? "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." They loved him because he loved them and had built them a house of worship.

So today Mr. A speaks well of Mr. B because they are friends. Mr. C speaks ill of Mr. B because they are enemies. And similarly with us. One man praises us because he is our friend or we have done him a favor; another person besmirches our characters because of some real or fancied wrong. Mothers can see no faults in children whose end may be a prison or a gallows. These same mothers will represent other mothers' children as rascals or scoundrels, when their only crime has been a baseball accidentally batted through a window.

Let us not take too seriously what others say or think of us. These words or thoughts may be miles from the truth and are seldom accurate.

Now in verse six of this chapter we read, "The centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord trouble not thyself: for I am not

worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof."

The man says he is not worthy. This is his opinion of himself. In like manner, each of us has rated himself by one or more standards common among men. If one person's ambition is to make a million, he considers himself a success when he makes a million. Failing to do this he would rate himself a failure. Still another desires to gain mastery in one of the professions and regards success or failure in respect to his profession.

What do we think of ourselves? Are we the pessimists who always regard themselves as unworthy sinners, continuously incapable of any good and inclined to all evil, even though redeemed and born again? Or are we rank optimists as some perfectionists who insist that as redeemed they no longer commit any sins but only make mistakes?

Kind friends! Even our own opinions of ourselves are not too accurate. Jesus is the revealer of God and man, and often he warns his disciples of all time against self-righteousness. God pity and redeem the man whose expectation of heaven is based on his opinion, "I'm all right," or, "I'm just as good as the next man." God also pity and redeem the sinner, so cast down and despairing because of his sin that he reckons no power on earth or in heaven can save him.

In verse nine of this chapter we have the words of Jesus concerning this centurion. "I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Substantially what Jesus is saying here is this: "I declare him worthy." Here is the opinion of the Son of God. Here judgment on a man is given by one who "knew what was in

The Western Seminary Bulletin

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HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

EDITORIAL BOARD

LESTER J. KUYPER, Faculty Representative.
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As this second issue of *The Western Seminary Bulletin* is being prepared the faculty and the editorial board are mindful of the encouraging response from many friends. We also appreciate the suggestions for improving the *Bulletin*. The Seminary hopes through this means to make itself of greater service to our Church and to the Kingdom of God at large.

Our area of service is especially concentrated in the class room. Students are guided along new paths of thought in Christian theology. Formal lectures and informal seminars open the treasures of God's revelation. Depths of Holy Scripture are fathomed, needs of mankind are discovered and the Gospel of Christ is applied to our present problems. The purpose is to equip the candidate with every resource for the Gospel ministry.

Our ministry to the Church, however, enlarges like concentric circles about the pebble dropped in a quiet pool. Needless it is to enumerate the various relationships faculty and students have with churches. In recent years the library with its wide range of books and periodicals is being used by many friends throughout the Church. So we also trust that the *Bulletin* may find its useful place among the ministry of our Reformed Church and our alumni in other communions.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF LECTURES

Dr. Elmer G. Homrighausen, professor of Christian Education, Princeton Seminary, will present a series of lectures on Evangelism, October 22-24.

Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, president of New

Brunswick Seminary, will be with us February 23-25 to speak on the subject, "Preaching Unashamed."

We are happy to welcome the following as new students in our Seminary:

Chester Droog, Hull, Iowa.
C. Norris Fischer, Evansville, Indiana.
Barclay B. Fishburn, Schenectady, N. Y.
Clarence Greving, Prairie View, Kansas.
William Haak, Sodus, New York.
Warren Hietbrink, Wilmot, Minnesota.
Raymond Reeverts, Ackley, Iowa.
Paul Schmidt, Chapin, Iowa.
Robert Schuller, Alton, Iowa.
Darwin Secord, Ganges, Michigan.
Ellsworth Ten Clay, Westfield, N. Dakota.
John Vander Waal, Pella, Iowa.
Donald Weemhoff, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ALUMNI NOTES

May 14, 1947, fourteen young men were graduated from the Seminary and presented to the Church for the Gospel Ministry. We salute them and record their fields of service.

Thomas D. Boslooper, assistant pastor, First Church, Hawthorne, New Jersey and graduate student at Union Seminary, New York.

Fred R. Buseman, pastor, Buffalo, New York.

Wesley C. Dykstra, graduate student at Union Seminary, New York.

John Gillesse, unassigned.

Harvey T. Hoekstra, missionary under appointment to the South Sudan in Africa, studying this year at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Arthur C. Johnson, pastor, Prairie View, Kansas.

Wayne O. Lemmen, pastor, Atwood, Michigan.

Harland Steele, pastor, Community Church, Hopkins, Michigan.

Norman J. Tenpas, unassigned.

William E. Vanden Berg, pastor, Hope Church, Grand Haven, Michigan.

Delbert J. Vander Haar, pastor, Trinity Church, Fulton, Illinois.

Jacob Van Heest, pastor, Alsip Church, Chicago, Illinois.

James Vos, pastor, Faith Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Harmon R. Wierenga, unassigned.

The class of '47 gave an Electro-Voice Microphone as their token of esteem for the Seminary. Study in voice control for effective speaking has been carried on enthusiastically under the direction of Mr. E. S. Avison, instructor in speech. This much needed and appreciated gift will be put to good use.

Jerome De Jong, '44, pastor of Second Church, Paterson, New Jersey, received his Th. M. degree from Union Seminary, New York, January 31, 1947. His thesis subject was "The *Ordo Salutis* as Developed by the Dutch Theologian, Herman Bavink." Mr. De Jong is continuing his graduate studies.

Henry Voogd, '44, until recently pastor of the Church at Clover Hill, New Jersey, was granted his Th. D. degree by Princeton Seminary, May 20, 1947. His doctoral dissertation was entitled, "A Critical and Comparative Study of the Old Latin Texts of First Samuel." Mr. Voogd is joining the faculty at Hope College.

CONFERENCE NOTES

The Sixth Annual Summer Conference for ministers and Christian leaders during the first week in August was well attended and much appreciated. More than one hundred fifty were registered. This is not the occasion to write a resume of courses offered by the well chosen speakers. Dr. Will Orr from Des Moines shared the experiences of his ministry in a busy down town church. Dr. John E. Kuizenga presented Calvin's *Institutes* with freshness and clear insight. Studies in the Gospel by Luke were conducted by Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse of Philadelphia. Great characters of Church History and their teachings were reviewed by Dr. William Childs Robinson from Decatur, Georgia. Dr. Simon Blocker was in charge of the forum on Practical Theology. This issue of the *Bulletin* contains a digest of his last lecture at the conference, "A Minister's Reading."

Eight students of the Seminary attended the Inter-Seminary Conference held at Oxford, Ohio, last June. This was a new venture in conference enterprise which proved to be significant and successful. We have asked Wesley Dykstra to write a summary of the conference for the *Bulletin*. Outstanding speakers, searching analyses and Christian fellowship with many groups were the never-to-be-forgotten features of the conference.

Another new conference was set up at

Louisville, Kentucky, June 23-24. This was organized by the American Association of Theological Schools for Seminary Librarians. A 76 page mimeographed summary of proceedings reveals the tremendous amount of work done in two days. Organization for seminary librarians was effected. Problems such as library accreditation, religious periodical indexing, book lists, etc., were discussed and assigned for additional investigation. We are pleased that our librarian, Margaret VanRaden, attended and shared in the benefits of the conference.

The conference call from abroad was also heard on our campus. Harold De Roo, senior, attended the World-wide Christian Youth Conference at Oslo, Norway, this summer. He went as official representative of the Reformed Church. We hope to have him share the inspiration and enthusiasm of the conference in our next issue.

Mr. L. Goulooze, who served many generations of students as caretaker of the campus, retired during the summer. "Lane", as he was called, had a long and useful career on the campuses of our schools. Before coming to Holland he was the caretaker at Central College. For the last ten years he served our needs well. Students, alumni and faculty greet you, "Lane." We appreciate the many helpful things you have done. May God bless you.

Mr. Bert Wierenga has now been appointed superintendent of buildings and grounds.

Professor William Goulooze will again take his place in the department of Church History. His illness, which necessitated treatments and rest for one semester, has been completely removed according to the specialists. We join with his friends in gratitude to God for this recovery of health.

Opinions of Us . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

man." Here is the same authority that set forth the Scribes and Pharisees in their true light when he called them hypocrites.

Now, my brother and sister, what does Jesus think of you? Search your heart and life and try to give an honest answer to this question, if you value your soul's salvation. Will Jesus say of you and me, "I never knew you," or "He is worthy"?

A Minister's Reading

SIMON BLOCKER

A MINISTER of blessed memory used to read a life of Christ once a year. Every year he selected one he had not read before. He usually read a life of Christ during his summer vacation at which time he planned his pulpit ministry for the coming church year. He felt it necessary regularly to face up to the total significance of the person and work of Christ and to motivate his preaching and pastoral work accordingly. His particular technique answered the purpose and brings out a principle for a minister's reading worthy of adoption. The principle is this: Read a book a year on every field and function of your calling as a good minister of Jesus Christ. A minister's reading does not meet the necessities of the situation if haphazard, or if confined only to getting ready for next Sunday, or if sphered by personal likes and dislikes.

Consider how far-reaching the suggested principle is. It is agreed that as a preacher of the Word of God a minister must know his Bible. He must know it, not only in the sense of acquaintance with its contents, but in the sense of continued experience of its power. He must therefore be an inveterate Bible reader, reading it not primarily in search of texts, but devotionally, prayerfully asking, "What is God's message to me?" He will read it verse by verse, and chapter by chapter, but also book by book, because the Bible is the one book a minister has to get into his system in its total significance if his life and ministry are to be open channels for God's seeking and redeeming grace. A minister's reading must be a recognition of the basic priority of reading the Bible if he is to qualify himself progressively to speak for God.

Beyond the Bible itself lies a vast continent of Christian literature which every minister will conscientiously explore. Happy the minister who can explore this continent as a believing and as a redeemed man. Conflicting voices of critical Christian scholarship come to varied conclusions in the effort to put every part of the Bible in its historical setting and to expound the meaning. A minister's reading will include this immense field. A minister makes work of it to read commentaries, biblical theologies,

systematic theologies, outline studies of Scripture, such as furnish both analysis and living message, and special volumes embodying the results of more specific investigation and research.

It is not enough to stress the importance of reading books in the field just suggested. The matter of purpose is equally important. To illustrate. Take the latest issue in the series known as *The Moffatt New Testament Commentary*. It is a volume on "The Johannine Epistles" by C. H. Dodd, Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, England. The distinguished author comes to critical conclusions about who wrote the Johannine epistles which many readers will not accept nor does he hesitate to charge their author with being mistaken in the field of eschatology, for instance, but when it comes to exposition of the Christian Gospel, that man Dodd will certainly give the reader mountain top experiences of spiritual realization. It is in our heart to say to a minister as he reads, "Make your reading a constructive technique for mastering the Christian Gospel, a quest for fresh realization of its power, and a determined effort to add to your stock of dynamic Christian conceptions." Books like the current one by Dodd should be read right straight through like a novel and read a second and third time until you see the First Epistle of John in the powerful light which the great scholar Dodd turns on it. He is humble enough to own up to it that at this late date critical conclusions are necessarily conjectural, but the man is "right on the beam" in interpretations which illumine the mind and stir the soul.

A minister's reading must include current books by present-day Christian scholars so that the true Christian Gospel may be preached in a language intelligible to those who hear it and from a background of understanding of contemporary world problems. A minister's reading will cover the large literature of a cultural nature which promotes understanding of the human situation in our day.

As a preacher, a minister is wise if he reads a book on preaching every year, like Farmer's *The Servant of the Word*, or Stewart's *Heralds*

of God. As a human being with varied problems in personal life, he will not fail to read a book every year like Turnbull's *A Minister's Obstacles*. As one who is looked to for counsel, he will not read less than one book a year like Bonnell's *Pastoral Psychiatry*, not forgetting a book a year on pastoral work like Blackwood's or Jefferson's *The Minister as Shepherd*.

As one who ministers to people in sorrow, a pastor does not neglect to read a book a year on the mystery of suffering, careful also to include in his reading list something like Blackwood's *The Funeral*. As one charged with the conduct of public worship, responsible for his church's program of Christian education, under necessity of praying in public again and again, obligated to administer the sacraments, sustaining a vital relation to the music of the sanctuary, bearing the burden of being administrator in the local parish (concerning whom it may be said in the local church as was said in the Old Testament story of Joseph in prison, "Whatsoever was done there he was the doer of it") a minister should read at least one book a year in the following fields: public worship, religious education, prayer, the Christian sacraments, evangelism, hymnology, church administration, Christian family life, child psychology, adolescent problems, youth work, Christian laity, adult Christian education and what have you. Every minister can figure it out for himself and make a list of books to read for a current year which will meet the numerous functions and aspects of his immense calling. Great books there are of yester-year in all these spheres but why neglect current ones like Henry Sloan Coffin's *The Worship of God*, Thomas Hugh Kerr's *The Christian Sacraments* and Arthur Gossip's *Prayer*.

Since all problems of the Christian ministry are seen at length to add up to the problem of the minister, his reading will include classics of Christian devotion and guide-books thereto like Hugh Martin's current *Great Christian Books*. What a Christian a minister must be and what a reader to satisfy people who go to church like the Psalmist did, as in Psalm 27, "to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple"! It is a large order for a minister to satisfy the right motivation of people when they go to church. They go for worship and adoration. They go also to get answers to life's questions, to develop a truly Christian

philosophy of life. They must be shown the beauty of the Lord. They must be given light on life's mysteries. They must be ever more deeply rooted in Christ and ever more firmly built up in Christ under their faithful pastor's full proclamation of God's self-revelation in His Son, the Savior of the world.

Something can be said on how to read. Turnbull in his book says that a minister ought to read the newspaper standing up, to which we would add the four words, "without leaning against anything." That is the bumble-bee style of reading, the style for newspapers, an immense concession at that to lovers of sporting pages and, believe it or not, of financial sheets.

The most profitable form of reading is to ask questions of the book you are reading and write out the answers furnished by the book. This is reading in "first gear." It pays big dividends. It builds knowledge, promotes understanding, develops power of original thinking, stimulates ability to concentrate, quickens the art of simple self-expression and lays up a wealth of intellectual treasure on which you draw a fine income of dynamic ideas.

A third form of reading is to take notes as you read, a commendable habit. This is "second-gear" reading. It also takes time and thought, but the wages are commensurate. "First-gear" and "second-gear" reading at length make possible and agreeable the "high-gear" type of reading which is done by professional book reviewers. One such said that the average book should not take more than an hour and a half. The one who said it not only read but mastered a book in that time. He had such a background of knowledge and was so quick on the trigger in catching on that he would turn pages very quickly while he said under his breath, "yes, yes." When he got through he knew the book as if he had sweat blood over it.

A minister should read four hours a day to insure imperative growth, cover necessary ground and avoid ruts. Four hours of uninterrupted reading and study seems an attainable achievement. Clock yourself in the matter. You may find that four hours a day is an almost interminable assignment. It is hard, very hard. But as ministers we are hard men, that is to say, hard on ourselves in keeping hard at it to qualify ourselves and keep qualified to do the most important work done on earth, the work of preaching the Gospel, which is God's

technique for regenerating humanity and building the kingdom of God. So, as the old hymn says, "To the work! To the work!"

Hugh Martin in the book mentioned tells what a brother minister said about the saintly Samuel Rutherford, "I never knew one in Scotland like him. He seemed to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always teaching in the schools, always writing treatises, always reading and studying." What a description of the Christian ministry! The brother minister of Samuel Rutherford might have added, "Always bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus." You cannot fit such a life into a forty hour week. Every true minister of Jesus Christ will, like Samuel Rutherford, be always praying, preaching, visiting,

teaching, writing, reading, studying.

Hugh Martin tells also of a London merchant who was converted to Christ on a visit to Scotland. Under God it took three preachers and three sermons to do it. In his testimony the converted merchant said of one of the preachers, "He showed me the majesty of God"; of another, "He showed me the loveliness of Christ"; and of the third, "He showed me all my heart." A minister will so live and labor that God can use him to do what each of the three did. He will read books which help to keep life in Christ's presence, which give Christ His rightful crown and proclaim and glorify Christ as the Savior of the world. He will read everything he can lay his hands on which has been written in praise of Christ.

Man's Disorder and God's Design

WESLEY C. DYKSTRA

FOR a week in mid-June, some six hundred students gathered in the little town of Oxford, Ohio, to constitute the North American Interseminary Conference. These students represented one hundred twenty-one seminaries from every part of the United States and Canada. The constituency assumed an even more cosmopolitan atmosphere and an international flavor because of the presence of a considerable number of exchange students currently enrolled in American institutions. These representatives assembled to consider their vocations as ministers of the world-wide Church of Christ in this fateful day. Western Seminary was a participant in this Interseminary Conference with a delegation of eight students in attendance.

THE CONFERENCE: ADVENTURE IN ECUMENICITY

This Oxford Conference was at once a culmination, a point-in-process, and an adventure. As culmination, it capped a three-year preparation period, during which plans and studies emerged from seminary campuses across the country. Eight regional divisions geographically cover America and include the majority of the seminaries. The effort has been to keep this a self-conscious, indigenous effort on the part of the studentry. A triennial conference was projected, the one of June 1947 being the first of its kind.

As point-in-process, this conference was purposed to be the spring-board for the next three-year period of Interseminary effort, which period will again culminate in a conference. Each conference marks a new beginning in Interseminary relations, based on the study and activity of the previous term.

In this connection a word ought to be inserted concerning conference materials. In preparation for the 1947 conference, *The Interseminary Series* was produced as a venture in co-operative Christian thinking. The series (Harpers, 1946) is composed of five volumes, four of which are symposia, to which some thirty authors have contributed. The final volume is a summary treatment by Robert S. Bilheimer, executive secretary of the Movement. Though designed specifically as study material for this conference, the volumes have enjoyed a much wider acclaim and have been variously endorsed as "must" reading for an alert ministry. The fact that these study materials have gained an appeal superseding the immediate needs and designs of the conference enhances the relevance of the conference to the Church at large.

As adventure in ecumenicity, the conference represented a remarkable achievement in interdenominational fellowship and co-operation. It provided the situation for the meeting of six

hundred of today's theological students and a cross-section of their teachers. Here was an actual experience of the ecumenical Church: unity in the bond of Christ, a unity not negating nor negated by denominational lines. For one week, students and leaders from many communions faced the contemporary problems of Christendom, sought to redefine the relevance of the Church to the world, and examined the claims of the Church upon the present ministry and that still unordained.

It must be immediately insisted that ecumenicity is not a new phenomenon in ecclesiastical history. The will to unity is as old as the Church itself. The idea is old in impulse, albeit somewhat newer in fulfillment. Christianity is ecumenical. Modern Church unity may be dated at 1795, the year in which the London Missionary society was convened, representing four or five denominations in Britain. Characteristically, missions have parented the program of ecumenicity, as it was in missions that the need for unity has been especially felt. And interestingly, unity has given impetus to mission activity. The Church is the body of Christ—many members but always one body! Can we condemn the Chinese for incordiality just because they have a different way of shaking hands?

THE CONFERENCE: ITS CONTENT

The purpose of the conference was to assemble seminary students from the entire continent:

To seek a deepening and quickening of spiritual life through worship, study and fellowship together;

To confront realistically the challenge which our culture presents to the Church, in order that there may be a total reconsecration of life to God's transforming purpose;

To achieve a broader vision of the worldwide movement of the ecumenical Church and of the responsibility of the individual in it.

Space here will accommodate no more than a gleaning of what the conference did in attaining these purposes.

I. Man's Disorder. The persistent atmosphere is that of secularism, the spirit which sees and sets everything in a human framework. Every area of modern life is permeated with it. The problem is more the world in the

Church than the Church in the world. As secularism seeks an interpretation of life that leaves religion out of the picture, religion has become increasingly irrelevant to life, individual and corporate. The Church in the life of the average layman makes little difference, except to cause him to wonder about its place and message. Western culture is separated from moral control. Man is now attempting to fashion mechanical controls for what happened at Hiroshima.

In the characteristic secular spirit, attitudes tend to come in pairs. There is optimism that stems from an unwillingness to know impending disaster; this optimism is countered by despair at the inability to find the good life. Realism and essential honesty in facing the world is dissipated by a sentimental escapism. There is a sociability in the sense of little real provision for privacy, balanced by an individuality, product of a deep sense of frustration at failure to find communion. Individuality and community are not always complementary but frequently contradictory.

It is fatal to compare the Church to the world in the sense that the Church can be regarded as morally secure. The spirit of secularism relegates the Church to a dispensable position. To comprehend the Church in relation to life poses a problem for many whose solution is sought in dismissing the Church. For those in the real struggle of life the problem strikes deepest. Consequently the Church tends to become a company of the comfortable, while the very folks who have allowed it to become that criticize it for being what it is.

II. God's Design. At this point the tone of the conference rebounded from the danger of despair, not into an easy optimism, but into an examination of the divine resources available to meet the predicament of man and in the light of which the sickness of civilization may more adequately be interpreted.

God's design is the Gospel, the custodian of which is the Church. Man is a rebellious child of God, who, in pursuit of false God-likeness, has absolutized mind, culture, state, race, class, the machine. Against the background of that dismal background the Gospel takes meaning. In the midst of the bad news about man, the Gospel is good news to man: God become man for man's salvation. God, blazing with indignation yet brimming with mercy, invades the

province of human, temporal history with an eternal, supernatural act: the incarnation. Through faith in Jesus Christ redemption becomes actual. Man is integrated with God's plan for things. This Gospel must be more than an ethical system or it has little to recommend it above Confucianism. The Gospel speaks of a God who speaks, reveals himself to man, assumes humanity with him, sacrifices himself for him.

The guardian and channel of the Gospel is the Church of Jesus Christ. This makes the Church the bearer of that which can redeem the world. The Church is a society within society, working in the direction of making the whole society the Church. The Church is the incarnation in process, a divine community composed of redeemed people. With all its imperfection because of the human equation it is the grandest institution in human history. Its task and opportunity is evangelizing for God, a task whose lack of fulfillment no barrier can excuse. Evangelism is the creation of new life through Jesus Christ, the relation of the Gospel to the world, all part of the redemptive work of Christ.

III. *The Challenge to the Minister.* The Church must fashion a continuing strategy, but that strategy becomes effective only with local alertness. To make it lively, make it local. Real life is in local dimensions. God works through men rather than institutions and resolutions. The individual as pulpiteer, as counsellor, as citizen is confronted with the task of giving the whole a Kingdom-of-God center. He is an individual working with individuals in local situations. In all, he has the opportunity to relate himself, these individuals and these situations to the larger dimensions of the Church. It is on the local level that the problems of secularism must be met, where folks are challenged with the claims of the Gospel. The minister accomplishes the word of God. No community rises higher than its Church; no Church higher than its leadership; no leadership higher than that portion of its life which is hid with God in Christ.

THE CONFERENCE: A CRITIQUE

The ecumenical reformation has been termed one of the two or three great movements in the history of Christendom. The following particular features may be enumerated in an

appraisal of the 1947 Interseminary Conference.

1. Not least to be noted is the element of fellowship which was an integral part of the conference and its spirit. This was not merely incidental, nor in any sense "plotted." It was a concomitant experience, yet the heart of the experience. The Reality of Meeting is precisely what was lived. Personalities from everywhere pooled their powers and enthusiasms in a study of problems modern yet perennial. This fellowship resulted in a significant raising of horizons as new appreciations were created for the task and the Church ordained to do it. The conviction was established that no one group may presume to be exclusive guardian of the faith. This conviction need in no way cancel one's loyalty to his own particular group. It is interesting—and I think accurate—to note that the majority of the leaders in interdenominational movements are more proper in their appreciations of their own denominations because of their larger contacts.

2. An unmistakable emphasis was insistence upon the importance of the individual. The working unit for the entire work of the Church is the person, both as to object and agent. In the language of one of the speakers, reformation is always born of revival and revival is always born of conversion, not social and mass but single and individual. The task of the Church is the task of the local Church multiplied by its frequency.

3. The conference set a premium on the trends toward unity among the forces of Christianity. There has been much done in that direction, though it cannot be said that we have a united Protestantism. Unity is necessary, not only for strength, but because without it the very relevance of the Church is impaired and its ambassadorship for peace is rendered hypocritical.

4. The conference was earnestly realistic in its approach to world and Church problems. There was no shrinking from their seriousness. Fools sometimes rushed in where angels fear to tread. Realism was evidenced in the tone of frankness that governed the formal and informal discussion groups which formed an integral part of the conference procedure. The quality of analysis was significantly searching. There was a real sense of urgency: the only time to do a great thing is *now*.

5. There was, moreover, no thought of an easy panacea for the world's ills. When problems are complex, solutions are seldom simple. To say that the Gospel is the answer is incomplete until it has been applied—which application is the continuing and absorbing task of the Church.

6. There was some tendency to failure to see the human situation *sub specie aeternitatis*. We are sometimes content that a fairly thorough analysis is its own solution; consequently we spend the day analyzing problems. This scathing analysis can actually become a prop to the human ego: man is proud of his ability to know what ails him. Accent on human problems tends to anthropocentricity. This may take the form—and often does — of substituting philosophy for religion. The antidote here must not be sought in retreat into an other-worldly theology, but in an earnest application of religion to life now.

7. A strong desire for evangelization was an essential motivation of the conference, as it ought ever to be of the Church. The urge to evangelization took two directions. First, there is need for gaining conversions: this is extensive evangelization. Second, every area of life, individual and social, must come under the sway of the Gospel: this is intensive evangelization. The task of the Church in terms of

evangelization is to gain every part of every life for Jesus Christ.

8. In respect to the task of communication this conference did two things. First, it provided an occasion for actual interdenominational communication. Second, in the midst of that situation it became evident that communication is not without its difficulties. When Christians speak, not all Christians can understand them. There is sometimes more agreement than language would indicate; sometimes disagreements persist despite similarities in terminology. Basic doctrines and concepts are stifled by this inability to communicate, when their value lies in what they can do communicated.

9. Neither liberalism nor conservatism is wholly secure in its relevance to the task of the Church. The self-assurance of orthodoxy, with its ease of dogmatism, has sometimes kept it out of the arena of actual life problems. But it was repeatedly urged that it was conservatism that proved its mettle as the vitality of Christianity in days of stress, especially on the mission fields. Liberalism has tended to a too easy view of the whole situation, and was satisfied with human considerations to the extent that it became insipid and without perspective. The need is for a virile faith, a motivating sense of world mission, and effective techniques to make significant impact upon the world.

Book Reviews

An Outline of Biblical Theology, by Millar Burrows. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946. Pp. 370. \$3.50.

Under 18 general headings the author presents 110 concepts of biblical theology followed by a selected bibliography and indexes of both Scripture references and of names and subjects. The author's major concern is "with the essential nature and basic features, the real fundamentals, of biblical religion." (p. 3). The presentation is in the interest of Christian preaching, and the author is convinced that, "What Christian preaching needs...is not biblical adornment but the structure and substance of the Scriptures." (id.) For that reason Burrows does not employ the proof-text method; nevertheless, the book is buttressed with numerous Scripture references. The first two chapters alone contain approximately 300 references.

In "Authority and Revelation" the author points out that the primary purpose and content of revelation are practical rather than doctrinal. (p. 12). Biblical revelation does not mean the disclosure of metaphysical truth, but it does mean definite guidance for life and

for faith that leads to life. (p. 33). This revelation is progressive, and its true unity and final significance are to be found in the revelation of God in Christ. (p. 53) Along with the discussion on revelation the author includes inspiration, concerning which he says, "Not the books, not the words, but the men were inspired." (p. 25). "Inspiration may have been granted to compilers and editors as well as prophets and apostles," (p. 23) but the real author of Scripture is God. In this whole discussion the author presents some ideas which may be disconcerting to conservative theologians. However, conservatives should recognize that Burrows agrees with their most essential principles. Although the definition of the contents of revelation and inspiration may differ, the truths of revelation and inspiration themselves stand.

Another important chapter is on God. According to Burrows the biblical conception of God is theistic, personal, and spiritual. "He reveals himself in nature, in history, and in the spiritual experience of individuals." (p. 81). This is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the God of natural theology, of historic revelation, and of personal experience, "and we be-

lieve that these three are one God." (id.). Thus, Burrows' conception of God is trinitarian, but he himself does not interpret it strictly according to the orthodox conception. The author presses the point that "the distinction of persons is true only for our knowledge of God, not for his inner Being, which we cannot know." (p. 82). The author points out that the relationship between Persons of the Trinity is never philosophically worked out in Scripture; therefore, he does not attempt to do so.

One of Burrows' chief working concepts is mythology, as presented in the chapter on the Universe. "Mythology is...primitive man's philosophy." (p. 113). "It implies, not falsehood, but truth; not primitive, naive misunderstanding, but an insight more profound than scientific description and logical analysis can ever achieve." (p. 116). "The revelation preserved in the Old Testament and the New Testament alike is presented throughout in terms of a pre-scientific worldview." (p. 115). Further in this discussion and against this background the author establishes the validity of the biblical ideas of providence and of the miracle stories.

This reviewer believes that the discussion on the millennium is excellent. (pp. 201 ft.) Those who are troubled by this problem should read this particular section. In the same chapter there is also a challenging passage on the final state of the wicked. "The main emphasis should always be on the positive hope of the saved, but the eternal consequences of sin must not be ignored." (p. 212). The closing sections of this chapter offer good treatment of the Kingdom of God with special regard to its eschatological implications. The end is coming, but beyond inevitable doom and inescapable judgment the gospel offers hope and joy. (p. 219).

Regarding the Way of Salvation, Burrows stresses the sovereignty of God together with individual responsibility. The death of Jesus revealed the enormity of sin and at the same time showed how far God would go to reconcile sinners to himself. His death was necessary to his saving work. By repentance and faith the sinner comes into God's fellowship. Finally, the church is not an institution entrusted with the means of salvation and therefore able to communicate saving grace to its own members, but it is a community of those who have met the conditions of salvation and received God's free gift of justification and adoption, and who by virtue of being in Christ are members of his body. (p. 239).

The remainder of the book discusses Christian life, worship, service, and moral and social ideals. Both individuals and nations are urged to conform to the will of God. The task of the church requires home and foreign missions, evangelism inside the church as well as outside. The author's insight is particularly keen with reference to "a social gospel." He says that the Bible does not teach what we call a social gospel; however, active effort for the good of society is involved in the gospel so long as Christians are to continue living in this world. Spiritual salvation of individuals is the goal, but they must be saved not as isolated units but as members of the community of the redeemed.

(p. 286) At this point the author makes the best of his insight and ability.

Although the author humbly confesses that he discussed many of the subjects inadequately, this reviewer feels that better discussions should have been given to some subjects such as the final state of the wicked, baptism, and sin. Then too, the author gives certain assumptions too much place in his presentation. Too much stress is put on Israel's relation to Canaan, the documentary hypothesis, and the Kenite theory. And the author's acceptance of an Aramaic background to the New Testament and his questioning of the authenticity of many of the sayings of Jesus seem to root some of his positions in sand. In spite of these things, however, the book is an outstanding contribution to contemporary theological thought.

In reading the book one must keep in mind that the subject matter is biblical theology, not systematic theology. Burrows' genius is not in systematizing but in presenting the eternal religious values of the Bible in contemporary terminology and modes of expression. He speaks over against a background of philosophical pragmatism and materialism, and he draws heavily from radically liberal authors. This accounts for many of his philosophical limitations.

The book is clear in presentation, accurate in detail, comprehensive in outline, and demonstrative of good judgment in dealing with controversial subjects. The author is frank and sincere. His book can be read with profit by both liberals and conservatives. Liberals will come to an appreciation of the value of the Bible, and conservatives will discover how to challenge modern thought with the great truths of the Christian faith.

The reviewer recommends the book to the reading of thinking theologians and suggests its use as a handbook for theological students. Whoever reads the book will profit and be sure that he is keeping abreast of what is new and best in the field of biblical theology.

—THOMAS BOSLOOPER

Evil and the Christian Faith, by Nels F. S. Ferré. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947. Pp. xi—173. \$2.50.

Nels F. S. Ferré has written another book—this one being entitled, *Evil and the Christian Faith*. It has been on the market one year. It is one of the volumes of a series through which the author purposes to set out his theological positions. Therefore this book should be read in connection with its predecessor—*Faith and Reason*—and its forthcoming successors. Ferré is doubtless one of the recognized younger theologians of our country, and his active mind is bringing new prestige to the Abbot Professorship of Christian Theology at Andover-Newton Seminary.

The problem of Evil is, of course, the thorny problem both of philosophy and theology. Ferré's discussion leads one to conclude that he met it first in philosophy. In fact, he admits in his preface that a course in metaphysics under Professor Hocking gave him "the start I needed." Personally, I don't mind much where man starts on a problem as fundamental as this one; I am more interested in his conclusions.

Ferré states that he found the Christian faith to solve the problem of Evil with "amazing adequacy," but he couches the Christian faith in such philosophical language that it is not hard for a reader to lose his way as he tries to follow the author. Men used to say that philosophy is the handmaid of theology—and in that position it does yeoman service—but the ways along which this author takes his readers cause one to wonder whether theology is not, in this instance, serving philosophy. The book is amazing, wonderful, and stimulating, but the yardstick that determines values seems often to be reason instead of faith. Not that I mean to suggest that faith ought to exclude reason—I don't believe that!—but Ferré does sometimes let his reason exclude faith. To offset this criticism, however, the author makes a couple of statements that I think are very good. He writes, "Strong religion is not a matter of trusting after shutting one's eyes. It is rather trusting beyond the best that one can see with one's eyes open." I am inclined to believe that Ferré wants himself to do just that. Such an attitude for a modern theologian of note is refreshing and full of promise.

Ferré takes, as the starting-point in his thought on the problem of Evil, the Christian, Biblical teaching that God is love (*agape*, the author writes, and so it also is in the Greek.) In elucidation of the idea, he writes, "Agape is the nature of Perfect Spirit, the character of the Ideal Person. It is the basic meaning of God's activity. It is primarily divine, not human, love. It is the content of the Purpose of this process, and of all processes." This *agape*, the author affirms, is holy, is active, is perfect wisdom, is perfect power, is perfect freedom, is all that is good. It is unconditional love. The idea seems very satisfactory to me. I am interested, however, to know that the author is deeply indebted for this idea to the work done by a fellow Swede, Anders Nygren, and given to the American reading world in 1932 under the title *Agape and Eros*. James Moffat also wrote about the same idea about that same time. Now, Nygren's idea of Agape is that it is a purely giving love. Justification for that interpretation is that, in the Bible, love is not merely the greatest of human virtues; it is the inmost attribute of God Himself. It is the very essence of the Divine Being. And that divine love, both Nygren and Ferré assert, is a growing love giving even to the point of redemption.

You see, we must, most of us adjust ourselves to such an idea and principle. Most of us have, consciously or unconsciously, been influenced in our thinking by Augustine's teachings, so that for us all human love is acquisitive, and we give love moral value by the direction it takes. If we direct love toward God, it is *caritas*, and good; if we direct love toward earthly possessions, it is *cupiditas*, and evil. But, Augustine's idea of Agape is different from that of Nygren and Ferré. For Augustine, love is man's ascent to God; for Ferré, love is man's sharing in the essential quality of God. It is a new teaching, doubtless of great value, but most of us need to open our minds to the fact that there are theologians who view divine love from a point of view different from that which most of us have been taught to take. Ferré is in accord with Nygren, and

God as Agape is the central starting point of all he writes on the subject of the presence of evil in the world.

Thus, bearing in mind that for him Agape is giving, even to the point of redemption, we can accept his definition of Evil as "that which thwarts God's effecting of the universal Christian fellowship." He admits this definition to be in terms of our present life and understanding, and grants that what now hinders the establishment of fellowship may in the end be the very agency that helped most to effect the ultimate fellowship. So he maintains that human freedom, now thwarting God, may prove to be the very core of God's method of effecting fellowship in terms of depth, power and reality. Similarly, suffering may show itself ultimately a means of far greater good toward effecting the Christian fellowship than pleasure could possibly be. In fact, Ferré sets himself strongly against the hedonistic philosophy of life because he considers it partial, ephemeral, and an escape mechanism. God, who has existence in Himself, separate from the world of men and things—Ferré believes in the transcendence of God. Hurrah!—can take even the reactions that apparently oppose His purposes, and redirect them, or use even them to the realization of His holy objective—a universal Christian fellowship.

That position, of course, opens the door for a discussion of sin. Sin, in Ferré's mind, is "defiance of God's will for us. It is whatever thwarts *willingly* God's purpose for Christian fellowship." That emphasis upon the action of will as the differential between sin and evil is, to my mind, nice and right. Ferré believes, and I agree, that evil can be explained at all only on the personal level. Sin, committed by persons who voluntarily transgress, results in evil and its tragic presence in the world. See how much Ferré is in harmony here with the question in our Heidelberg Catechism, "Whence knoweth thou thy misery?", to which comes the answer, "Out of the law of God." Ferré writes, "God makes us responsible for the keeping of the whole law because He wants us to be delivered from our false attempt at self-sufficiency. He wants to take us out of our circle of self, out of our slavery to self, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God makes the law impossible in order that being convicted by it we may find no way to live by it." Thus the law can become our tutor to Christ. Men must see and dread the law as a tyrannical enemy over against them into whose hand they have played by a *willing* rejection of God and His fellowship. It is only as men recognize this fundamental error of their lives, this sin, that they become ready and *willing* to accept the salvation proffered in Christ." There is no Gospel for those who wilfully persist in sin." Sin and evil came into the world, Ferré teaches, on the personal level; consequently the solution can be only on the personal level—through man's response to Agape revealed in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

All Christians believe that the redemption that is in Christ must be cosmological, not merely personal. Paul writes in Romans that "the whole creation waiteth for the redemption of the sons of God." Ferré states

that the ultimate must be a *universal* Christian fellowship. So, as he comes toward the conclusion of his book, he has a chapter entitled, "Evil and Last Things." At that point I suspect many evangelical Christians will take exception to what they read. Ferré is a Universalist, and he believes that, short of the ultimate salvation of all creatures, men and animals, there can be no hell, for, if there is, God's love, His Agape, would be finite, because such love cannot include hell. Anything excluded from God's love makes that love finite and limited. To support his contention Ferré has a striking quotation from Athanasius.

"Surely it would have been better never to have been created at all than, having been created, to be neglected and perish; and, besides that, such indifference to the ruin of His own work before His very eyes would argue not goodness in God but limitation, and that far more than if He had never created men at all. It was impossible, therefore, that God should leave man to be carried off by corruption, because it would be unfitting and unworthy of Himself." (p. 118)

To this statement from one whose memory and work are revered in the circles of historic Christianity, Ferré adds, "The logic of the situation is simple. Either God could not or would not save all. If He could not, He is not sovereign; if He would not, He is not totally good."

At a point like this our fine writer shows that he has not completely outgrown the procedures and philosophies of the Humanists who make man and his conclusions ultimate. I admit that there have always been Universalists in the Christian Church, some of them basing their Universalism upon proof texts of the New Testament. Ferré does not, however, use proof texts, but says that the New Testament does not provide any conclusive witness, except as one, accepting Paul's assertions in Romans, is willing to grant that the deepest message of the New Testament is to the effect that God both can and wants to save all. And he writes some splendid paragraphs to substantiate his position. Perhaps Ferré's chief difficulty in this connection arises from his identification of "hell" with human stubbornness. That makes hell to be a temporary reality only to be destroyed ultimately by the aggressive Christian message. Well, the New Testament teaches more about hell than Ferré seems willing to accept, and at this point we must part company with him.

But, the book is tremendous, not in size but in content. No thinking man can read it and remain the same man. Ferré builds the walls of Gospel truth into the souls of men. His pen is a mighty agent for the evangelical message. His voice must be a trumpet voice sounding forth truth and soberness. He believes in God; he believes in Christ; he believes in sin and evil; he believes in a redemption through the Cross of Christ by which divine Agape will reconcile—and this is Pauline—all things to itself.

—J. R. MULDER

The New Modernism, by Cornelius Van Til. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1946. Pp. xx—384. \$3.75.

The thesis of Dr. Van Til's book is simple: he sets out to prove that Barthianism is nothing more or less than the old modernistic theology in new dress. He seeks to substantiate this thesis by rigorous analysis of the basic principles of modern philosophy since Kant, mainly in its epistemological bearing. The exhaustiveness of his analysis of modern philosophy and theology must command respect. We should not, however, be led to an acceptance of Dr. Van Til's conclusion—which is really not a conclusion but a premise—merely by the circumstance that it is made to appear to be substantiated by careful philosophical and theological analysis.

Dr. Van Til has patently determined not so much to discover a truth as to prove a premise—a premise which has no other apparent foundation than his own suspicion and his refusal even so much as to consider the criticism which dialectical theology has directed against his own system. This refusal reveals as dogmatic a confidence in the ultimate sanctity of his own theological system as that of Roman Catholicism in its system in its palmist declarations.

For it appears upon careful analysis that Dr. Van Til's profound discussion, in its most fundamental tenets, is shot through with spurious logic and misrepresentation of even the most patent meanings of Barthian theology. Among other things, he finds his cue for his premise in that element of Brunner's position at which he is most vulnerable to the criticism that he has not broken finally with a modernist construction—the precise point on which Brunner and Barth have parted company most violently!—and attributes this position to Barth. This is the position of Brunner on the matter of the relation of divine revelation to the general religious consciousness.

Dr. Van Til's major distortions of Barthianism occur not at incidental points in his argument but at exactly those points on which he explicitly allows the whole substantiation of his position to rest. The most general accusation against Barth is that he has wrenched historical Christianity from its original—or rather, its traditional—significance, using its terminology but repudiating its meanings, and reconstructed it along fundamentally Kantian lines. The only way in which he can make this accusation is by in turn repudiating the meaning of words in order to prove that Barthianism can be forced into Kantian mold.

The first major distortion occurs at a point on which Dr. Van Til explicitly declares his whole criticism to rest. This is the point of Barth's denial of a temporal causal creation. To Dr. Van Til this, by a curious bit of logic which sounds far too much better than it is, can only mean that Barth denies the existence of an ontological, self-complete Trinitarian God in independence of the world. Very much satisfied with this clever bit of logic, Dr. Van Til thinks that this so completely substantiates his premise that Barthianism is modernism, that henceforth he can work on an established assumption that there is no transcendence of God in Barth. To recognize this distortion one needs only

to be reminded that Barth's acknowledged denial of temporal causal creation is not at all the same as denial of such creation by modern science and modernistic theology—a denial which has its ultimate goal in the establishment of the autonomy of the universe. It is a denial which does not fall "below" but rises "above" Dr. Van Til's own creation doctrine and makes God even more completely and more meaningfully transcendent than Dr. Van Til can ever recognize him to be. Dr. Van Til has conveniently had to ignore such major emphases of Barth as his doctrine of *creatio continua*, the idea that the pre-existence of God is not identical with his transcendence, and the insistence that the true recognition of the transcendence of God involves the recognition of his transcendence over all of the created order, including Dr. Van Til's system of theology.

The second major distortion is equally obvious. It is the distortion of Barth's meaning in his doctrine of the complete self-manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. To begin with, it is hard to believe that Dr. Van Til has departed so far from the Biblical witness concerning the divine revelation of God in Jesus Christ that he would insist that in Christ God has revealed less than himself. There is no question of the fact involved here: Barth does make it a central feature of his doctrine of revelation that God is fully self-revealed in Christ. If that is his sin, then the meaning of the Incarnation, along with the whole Christian faith, is destroyed. True to his purpose of cramming Barthianism into a Kantian or post-Kantian idealistic strait-jacket, Dr. Van Til has had to twist this around so that it means that God exists in so far only as he is known—nay, more, that it is by our subjective knowing process that we bring him into existence! To accomplish this he has also had to contend that Barthianism is identical with Hegel's doctrine of becoming. And to accomplish this he has had to cut out of Barth's writings his whole insistence that the knowing process which Barth calls revelation is the absolute unqualified contradiction of the subjectivism of idealist epistemology, as well as of the subjectivist element which is retained in realist epistemology. And in doing that he has cut out just about everything that Barth has ever written! What manner of man is this who presumes to ignore everything another has written and then to charge him with fathering every bad thing that every philosopher and theologian has said from the time of Kant until now?

Perhaps this habit becomes nowhere so patent as in Dr. Van Til's declaration that Barth has posed the same epistemological problem and the same solution as was proposed by Kant. Kant's original sin, so declares Dr. Van Til, was that of starting with two separate worlds, the perceptual world of brute irrational being and the conceptual world of rationality. The human intellectual task, according to Kant, becomes that of rationalizing the irrational world by applying our concepts to our percepts. This is entirely wrong from Dr. Van Til's point of view, because Christianity begins with the thought of a self-complete ontological pre-existent God in whom being and rationality were coterminous. By some more curious logic this must mean for Dr. Van Til that being and divine rationality are also coterminous in the created world. Maybe they

are coterminous only for God—what relevance can that have for men? But if they are coterminous both for God and man, then there is nothing left of the Christian doctrine of the cosmic consequences of sin,—indeed, then the world as it is is a pretty good world after all, even prior to its redemption. Or maybe it does not need redemption because, being and rationality never having become separated, it has never been lost.

Dr. Van Til's interpretation of the actual course of Kant's thought is accurate enough. But the same can not at all be said of his insistence that Barth has done and sought to do only what Kant undertook to do. To Kant the task of rationalizing the irrational was a task both imposed upon and within the reach of man. Dr. Van Til's gravest misinterpretation of all occurs at the point where he insists that to Barth as to Kant this is a *subjective* possibility. It now becomes manifest—*mirabile dictu!*—that when Barth speaks of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit he is speaking only of "man's ideals for the rationalization of the non-rational." (p. 376) And this in the face of Barth's ceaseless and passionate insistence that this task can never under any circumstances and in any respect be solved from man's side and that man cannot know even so much as the irrationality of the world except as God reveals it to him.

Dr. Van Til has expended an immense amount of energy in the attempt to prove what in the final analysis cannot be proven because it simply is not true. The attempt to do the impossible has forced him to ignore what he chose to ignore and twist into its opposite that which he did not wish to ignore. In that attempt he has rendered but poor service to the cause of a constructive theology.

—D. IVAN DYKSTRA

Road to Reformation, a Biography of Martin Luther to the Year 1521, by Heinrich Bøhmer. Translated by John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Taffert. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946. Pp. xiii—449. \$4.00.

To the ordinary reader, even the ordinary minister, the history of Martin Luther begins with October 31, 1517, when he affixed the ninety five theses to the church door in Wittenberg. To the spiritual and psychological development of the great reformer, how he came to be what he was and to do what he did, but little attention is usually paid, and even if these questions do arise in the mind of the student, it has been difficult to lay hands on any book in which they were adequately discussed. This life of Luther in his early years supplies that lack, and will be of immense help to an understanding of the man and his history for any one who will earnestly study it. It does not go beyond the protective confinement of Luther in the Wartburg castle, immediately after the Diet of Worms, but up to that point it is very full.

The development of Luther's personality and his spiritual struggles are here presented with fulness of knowledge and sympathetic insight. The various steps in that development are dated to the year, the month, and sometimes to the day of the month from his own

writings, especially the marginal notes in books studied by him, and from the sermons and lectures which he prepared. It is shown that often these intimate personal remarks did not find their way into his spoken or printed utterances. Luther had come to an evangelical understanding of the Gospel, and had taught it for a long time before the outrageous practices of Tetzel in selling indulgences forced him into open conflict.

From that time on his development proceeded rapidly, so that in quoting him one needs carefully to date the utterance in question. For example, in early life he was a pacifist, and considered all war unchristian, even defensive war against the Turks. He got over that later. Pacifism seems to be a phase of spiritual adolescence through which many Christians have to pass, and from which some never emerge. Another example of development is his position with regard to the Hussites. At first he thought and spoke to them as heretics, not suspecting that he was substantially in harmony with them. When he found it out he was much surprised.

One is amazed at the quantity of his literary output in the years between 1517 and 1521. It is a pity that there were apparently no copyright laws and royalties at that time, or Luther would not have remained a poor man; but perhaps his influence was all the more extensive for that reason.

The greatest gain this reviewer carried away from the study of this work is a fresh understanding of the way in which Luther broke the medieval view of life, not only in its religious but also in its philosophical and secular aspects. The author brings out the fact that the fire which Luther kindled outside the gates of Wittenberg on December 10th, 1520, was not primarily for the purpose of burning the Papal Bull of excommunication but the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, which he derisively called "The Alcoran of Antichrist." It was an afterthought and wholly incidental to lay on the fire also the Bull in question. Following the author's guidance one learns to understand why Luther stands out as THE REFORMER, although others expressed similar ideas and many later worked with him. It was his hand that, as with a mighty hammer, shattered what men had lived by and thought for nearly a thousand years, and by that act a new world was made possible.

The translation is wonderfully well done. The book reads as if originally written in English, with none of the stiffness of style that is almost unavoidable in translations from German to English.

—ALBERTUS PIETERS

The Church and Christian Education, by Paul H. Vieth. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1947. Pp. 302. \$2.50.

This book, which utilizes the implications and findings of the Committee on the Study of Christian Education and the knowledge and experience of the writer, presents a challenge for all Christian educators. It is not a book of methods, but deals rather with the history

For this reason Christian education is as old as Christianity itself and includes the total program of the Church. It is of vital importance because it includes the essence of or reasons for the faith as well as the expressions of it. To both aspects this book is just. In agreement with much criticism from conservative circles the writer states that the modern education movement was over-confident of the goodness of man and therefore believed that Christian nurture alone would bring us the realization of Christian personality and a Christian social order. The theological reaction which points to the depravity of man "has been a disturbing challenge to the assumptions which underlay programs of Christian nurture." Rightly we are told that "the greatest problem of religious educators today is to restore the proper balance between these two truths"—i. e., of optimism and pessimism with respect to man.

Additional emphasis is given to the content side of Christian education since the historic confessions of the Christian faith are regarded as most essential. Christian education stems from the fact of God's revelation to man which must focus in Christ Jesus. Wholeheartedly we endorse the author's call for Christians fully consecrated to Christ and His Church and finding their authority in God. With the same enthusiasm we should accept the call for attention to the expressional or method side of Christianity. "Christianity must seek to help persons face their problems realistically. It must do more than seek a recovery of the past; it must call for constructive change toward a better future. Through an effort to enlist persons in remaking their own experience, as well as in the reconstruction of social relationships, Christian education must seek to win a victory for Christian living."

What are the problems in present day Christian education? They are numerous. There is need for new life in old organizations. The Sunday School, youth organization, weekday church school, the vacation church school, adult organizations, and religion in the home have all contributed to Christian education, but none of these have the total answer. Each organization arose to meet a particular situation. Times and conditions have changed but many of the old organizations have not. There is need for a unified program of worship, fellowship and teaching. Disinterested ministers and untrained laymen in the field of Christian education have brought many churches into a poor state of affairs. The curriculum of many churches has been poor. There are many other problems that are traced to their origin as only the author can do it.

What is the answer to these problems? An improved curriculum or program of Christian education will make the work of the Church more effective. Though the curriculum of a church includes all of life's experiences the discussion here is limited to prepared materials. Though there are many materials available now with a great deal of variety, the cry is for better materials which are Bible-centered, interesting, and aware of "God's redemptive purpose." To make such materials available there must be more interdenominational cooperation which calls upon more theologians, Bible students and other experts to write programs that will

and philosophy of Christian education of yesterday and today, and the needs of tomorrow.

Christian education is the very life blood of Christianity. To seek to extend one's most cherished beliefs and acts to others is a characteristic tendency of man. unify the work of each organization in the Church. An interdenominational press would be a great help. Though Mr. Vieth mentions that these materials are to be adapted to the emphases of various denominations he does not hesitate to say that their content must always call attention to the acceptance of the truths of the Christian faith. The effectiveness of improved materials will depend upon leadership. Therefore we must have ministers who are trained in Christian education at their respective seminaries and an extensive program of lay leadership training in every church.

This book has a very valuable chapter on the importance of the home in Christian education. Though the home is the major potential teacher in Christian education the average denomination has not given much attention to it. There has been some religious material published for use by the family, and there have been calls for responsible parents, but in the main the modern home continues to be negligent at the point of "purposeful Christian education". If there is to be "one world" there must be "one family". Christianity is a family religion and it must be presented in that way. The writer says that if there is no other contribution that the International Council of Religious Education makes than to help establish more Christian homes in the next ten years its efforts will not have been in vain. I regret that the book does not mention the responsibility and obligation of the church and parents to make Christianity the family religion because of the promises made at the baptism of infants. Every church that is truly strong has strong Christian homes which have not forgotten the covenant program of God. Though we may take pride in our denominational emphasis here, I believe we would do well to caution ourselves against negligence.

Another answer to the problems of present day Christian education is stronger interdenominational agencies. Here a great deal of space is given to the history and purpose of the International Council of Religious Education. The purpose of this organization is to give Christian leaders an opportunity for joint benefit and endeavor. There is no question in my mind but that there is strength in such a purpose. It is not to be an organization that dictates but one whose policies are determined by the denominations represented. Publications must be carefully compiled by representatives of the denominational boards and adapted to the individual church's need. Statements of faith or pronouncements are always to be made with attention called to those in the International Council of Religious Education who subscribed to them. At this point perhaps much dissatisfaction has come in the past. However, in a democratic society this very thing will always be a source of discontent because one will never get one voice for all opinions. Correctly, Mr. Vieth says that the International Council of Religious Education may be proud of its history and work.

He is aware of its faults and suggests the right measures for improvement.

Little space is given to the matter of religious education in the public schools. He emphatically says that unless there is a religious emphasis in our public schools we will have to resort to parochial schools. However, parochial schools are not the answer. The author believes that if the present programs of religious education in the average church were stronger and more unified we would have the solution. This we might debate but not now.

This is a book worth reading. It is no doubt the best, most recent statement of the church on Christian education. Its value lies not only in the notability of the author, but in the fact that the book represents the thinking of churchmen from many churches.

—BERT E. VAN SOEST

Managing Your Mind, by S. H. Kraines and E. S. Thetford. New York: Macmillan Co., 1945. Pp. viii—374. \$2.75.

S. H. Kraines is an M.D. and serves as associate in Psychiatry in the University of Illinois, College of Medicine, and as diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. The author or authors approach the subject of mind and its "management" scientifically and objectively.

In the presentation of personality problems and mental hygiene the authors approach their psychological analysis from a physiological point of view. They speak of the human organism as a TOTALITY—of body, mind, emotions, etc. The book is a splendid treatment in plain non-technical terms of fundamental principles of psychotherapy. The many case histories are valuable as illustrative materials and serve to add interest as well as clarity. The reader at times will smile and chuckle a bit at the clever and candid method of driving home some significant truth.

This is a study of psychotherapeutics with the emphasis upon a treatment of emotions and emotional tensions and how to detect and deal with them. Emotional tensions cause personality maladjustments which in turn cause illness and unhappiness; the avoidance of emotional tensions or the proper release and channeling of them makes for physical and mental health and hence for greater happiness. Health and happiness are postulated as the motivating goal of living. The prevention and the cure of emotional stress comes by way of increased cortical (mind, brain) activity—hence the title *Managing Your Mind*. "The plea of this book is, that we let our minds so control, so direct that there be less devastation—personal and social—and more light and warmth." (p. 29).

The thesis of the book is well given in a summary fashion on page 121 where the following principles for good mental health are advanced:

"First, seek competent medical advice and have all necessary physical and laboratory examinations. Second, follow implicitly your physician's advice and recommendations. Third, by cultivating an unemotional, reasoning attitude, reducing the tension under which you live, get your body into the con-

dition which will make it possible for your physician most adequately to help you and which will speed your recovery. Fourth, in the absence of organic disease, take over the job of managing your life—your thinking-feeling-acting total organism—and use it for your own enjoyment instead of letting it use you."

From this rather lengthy quotation it will be observed that good "psychology" is to be used, but, psychology is not taken as a universal "cure-all".

The book has its merits and its weaknesses. Among the fine things may be cited the following: The presentation of personality problems in an interesting, effective, scientific way, yet in non-technical terms. The chapter on "Psychological Mechanisms" (10) is particularly good. It deals with conditions and mechanisms that are not distinctly abnormal, as such, but characterize so many individuals in the every day hard business of living. The chapter on "Achieving Maturity" (15) is another good treatment, particularly the section on "feelings of inferiority". This much used term and expression is given meaning that is understandable. The chapter on "Self-Reliance and Courage" (16) deals with some splendid principles of child psychology and guides for child training.

Throughout the book the authors are quite articulate in their attitude toward intolerance. To them it is a vice. This strong attitude is commendable if they themselves abide by one of their fundamental principles; the avoidance of the excessive—"The minute any quality becomes excessive it begins to lose its constructive value; for balance and proportion are essential alike to art and life." (p. 286)

If one is interested in reading only fine theological treatises and books for genuine spiritual refreshing, then he will not read this one. Religion, according to these authors, obviously has little or no relevancy in the whole business of living completely and abundantly. It may be that we can forgive the authors for failing to incorporate religious principles. They are medics and not theologians. The emphasis on the relativity of everything is not so appealing—"Right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood—all abstractions are relative." (p. 272) One wishes that at least one absolute be postulated. If only the book would point to greater powers than self and to techniques of infinite resources such as: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, for he trusteth in Thee"—and like promises. But the pastor can fit that into the framework as given. In spite of this there are values in the book.

Who can read this book with profit, The Pastor can—partly as good reading for self-examination and self-discipline, giving him added insight into his own personality traits and possible "quirks". With information gained from the book he can enter more sympathetically with understanding into the experience of the mentally ill. Reactions and characteristic responses of many of his parishioners that come out of basic emotional disturbances and tensions can, in a measure, be detected and labeled. It is then that he will make use of his Biblical knowledge, pastoral theology and rich spiritual experiences to counsel and guide the

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sheep so much in need of shepherding. One of the most significant contributions that any pastor can make to his flock is to give wise counsel to the patient or the family relative to the best procedure to effect a cure or an arrest of a functional malady. Treatment must always be in the hands of experts and institutions founded for this ministry of mercy. To be directed to them is part of a pastor's solemn task.

Parents of growing youngsters can find a great deal of good advice in the book to guide them through the maze of difficult living. The chapter on "Sex and Marriage" (12) on the whole gives sane counsel and constructive guidance. Teachers of secular and religious education will discover hints, techniques and methods for personal as well as student mental hygiene.

—GEORGE H. MENNENGA

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